ABBOTT JACOB

FORESTS OF MAINE

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Forests of Maine

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Forests of Maine / Marco Paul's Adventures in Pursuit of Knowledge:

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PREFACE

The design of the series of volumes, which it is intended to issue under the general title of Marco Paul's Adventures in the Pursuit of Knowledge, is not merely to entertain the reader with a narrative of juvenile adventures, but also to communicate, in connexion with them, as extensive and varied information as possible, in respect to the geography, the scenery, the customs and the institutions of this country, as they present themselves to the observation of the little traveller, who makes his excursions under the guidance of an intelligent and well-informed companion, qualified to assist him in the acquisition of knowledge and in the formation of character. The author will endeavor to enliven his narrative, and to infuse into it elements of a salutary moral influence, by means of personal incidents befalling the actors in the story. These incidents are, of course, imaginary—but the reader may rely upon the strict and exact

truth and fidelity of all the descriptions of places, institutions and scenes, which are brought before his mind in the progress of the narrative. Thus, though the author hopes that the readers, who may honor these volumes with their perusal, will be amused and interested by them, his design throughout will be to instruct rather than to entertain.

CHAPTER I.
THE MOUTH OF THE KENNEBEC

One summer, Forester and Marco Paul formed a plan for going to Quebec. Marco was very much interested in going to Quebec, as he wanted to see the fortifications. Forester had told him that Quebec was a strongly-fortified city, being a military post of great importance, belonging to the British government. Marco was very much pleased at the idea of seeing the fortifications, and the soldiers that he supposed must be placed there to defend them.

On their way to Quebec, they had to sail up the Kennebec in a steamboat. As they were passing along, Marco and Forester sat upon the deck. It was a pleasant summer morning. They had been sailing all night upon the sea, on the route from Boston to the mouth of the Kennebec. They entered the mouth of the Kennebec very early in the morning, just before Forester and Marco got up. And thus it happened that when they came up upon the deck, they found that they were sailing in a river. The water was smooth and glassy, shining brilliantly under the rays of the morning sun, which was just beginning to rise.

The shores of the river were rocky and barren. Here and there, in the coves and eddies, were what appeared to Marco to be little fences in the water. Forester told him that they were for catching

fish. The steamboat moved very slowly, and every moment the little bell would ring, and the engine would stop. Then the boat would move more slowly still, until the bell sounded again for the engine to be put in motion, and then the boat would go on a little faster.

"What makes them keep stopping?" said Marco.

"The water is very low this morning," said Forester, "and they have to proceed very carefully, or else they will get aground."

"What makes the water so low now?" asked Marco.

"There are two reasons," replied Forester. "It is late in the summer, and the streams and springs are all low; so that there is but little water to come down from the country above. Then, besides, the tide is low this morning in the sea, and that causes what water there is in the bed of the river to run off into the sea."

"Is not there any tide in the river?" asked Marco.

"No," said Forester, "I suppose there is not, strictly speaking. That is, the moon, which attracts the waters of the ocean, and makes them rise and fall in succession, produces no sensible effect upon the waters of a river. But then the rise and fall of the sea itself causes all rivers to rise and fall near their mouths, and as far up as the influence of the sea extends. You see, in fact, that it must be so."

"Not exactly," said Marco.

"Why, when the water in the sea," continued Forester, "at the mouth of the river is very low, the water in the river can flow off more readily, and this makes the water fall in the river itself. On

the other hand, when the water in the sea is high, the water cannot run out from the river, and so it rises. Sometimes, in fact, the sea rises so much that the water from the sea flows up into the river, and makes it salt for a considerable distance from its mouth."

"I wonder whether the water is salt here," said Marco.

"I don't know," said Forester.

"If we had a pail with a long rope to it," said Marco, "we could let it down and get some, and try it."

"We could let the pail down, but I doubt very much whether we could get any water," said Forester. "It is quite difficult to drop the pail in such a manner as to get any water when the vessel is under way."

"I should like to *try*," said Marco.

"You can find out whether the water is salt easier than that," said Forester. "You can let a twine string down, and wet the end. That will take up enough for a taste."

"Well," said Marco, "if I've got a string long enough." So saying, he began to feel in his pockets for a string.

He found a piece of twine, which he thought would be long enough, but, on trial, it appeared that it would not reach quite to the water. Forester then tied it to the end of his cane, and allowed Marco to take the cane, and hold it over the side of the vessel; and by this means he succeeded in reaching the water, and wetting the end of the string. He could, after all, succeed in wetting only a small part of the string, for it was drawn along so rapidly by the motion of the boat, that it skipped upon the surface of the

water without sinking in.

At length, however, after he had got the end a little wetted, he drew it up and put it in his mouth.

"How does it taste?" said Forester.

The question was hardly necessary, for the *faces* which Marco made showed sufficiently plain that the water was bitter and salt.

"Yes, it is salt," said he. Then, suddenly casting his eye upon a long dark-looking substance, which just then came floating by, he called out,

"Why, Forester, what is that?"

"A log," said Forester.

The log was round and straight, and the ends were square. The log glided rapidly by, and soon disappeared.

"It is a pine log," said Forester. "There are vast forests of pine trees in this state. They cut down the trees, and then cut the trunks into pieces of moderate length, and draw them on the snow to the rivers. Then, in the spring, the waters rise and float the logs down. This is one of these logs floating down. Sometimes the river is quite full of them."

"Where do they go?" asked Marco.

"Oh, men stop them all along the river, and put them into booms, and then fasten them together in rafts."

"How do they fasten them together?" asked Marco.

"They drive a pin into the middle of each log, and then extend a rope along, fastening it to each pin. In this manner, the rope holds the logs together, and they form a long raft. When they

catch the logs in booms, they afterwards form them into rafts, and so float them down the river to the mills, where they are to be sawed."

"Can men stand upon the rafts?" said Marco.

"Yes," replied Forester, "very well."

"They make a floor of boards, I suppose," said Marco.

"No," replied Forester; "they stand directly upon the logs."

"I should think the logs would sink under them," replied Marco, "or at least roll about."

"They sink a little," replied Forester; "just about as much as the bulk of the man who stands upon them."

"I don't know what you mean by that, exactly," said Marco.

"Why, the rule of floating bodies is this," rejoined Forester. "When any substance, like a cake of ice, or a log of wood, or a boat, is floating upon the water, a part of it being above the water and a part under the water, if a man steps upon it, he makes it sink enough deeper to submerge a part of the wood or ice as large as he is himself. If there is just as much of the wood or ice above the water as is equal to the bulk of the man, then the man, in stepping upon it, will sink it just to the water's edge."

"But perhaps one man would be heavier than another man," said Marco.

"Yes," replied Forester; "but then he would be larger, and so, according to the principle, he would make more wood sink before the equilibrium was reached."

"What is *equilibrium*?" asked Marco.

"Equilibrium is an equality between two forces," replied Forester.

"I don't see what two forces there are," said Marco.

"There is the weight of the man pressing downwards," said Forester, "for one, and the buoyant power of the water, that is, its upward pressure, for the other. The weight of the man remains constantly the same. But the upward pressure of the water increases in proportion as the log sinks into it. For the deeper the log sinks into the water, the more of it is submerged, and it is more acted upon and pressed upward by the water. Now, as one of these forces remains constant, and the other increases, they must at length come to be equal, that is, in equilibrium; and then the log will not sink any farther. That's the philosophy of it, Marco."

Marco did not reply, but sat looking at the barren and rocky shores of the river, as the boat glided by them. Presently another log came into view.

"There," said Forester, "look at that log, and see whether you think that you could float upon it."

"Yes," said Marco, "I think I could."

"It depends," said Forester, "on the question whether the part of it which is out of water is as big as you are."

"I think it is," said Marco.

"Yes," added Forester, "I have no doubt that it is."

"Only I should roll off," said Marco.

"True," replied Forester; "but the millmen, who work about

the logs, acquire astonishing dexterity in standing upon them. If there is only enough of the log above water to equal their bulk, so that it has buoyant power enough to float them, they will keep it steady with their feet, and sail about upon it very safely."

"I should like to try," said Marco.

"Perhaps we shall have an opportunity at some place on the river," said Forester.

Here Marco suddenly interrupted the conversation by pointing up the river to a column of smoke and steam which he saw rising beyond a point of land which was just before them.

"Here comes another steamboat," said he. "See, Forester."

"No," said Forester, "I believe that is a steam mill."

"A steam mill!" repeated Marco.

"Yes," replied Forester. "They have steam mills and tide mills to saw up the logs in this part of the river. Farther up, where there are waterfalls on the river, or on the streams which empty into it, they build mills which are carried by water. I presume that that is a steam mill."

At this moment, Marco's attention was diverted from the steam mill by a boat which came gliding into the field of view. There was one man in the boat rowing it. Another sat in the stern, with a pole in his hand. The pole had an iron hook in the end of it. A short distance before the boat was a log floating upon the water. The oarsman was rowing the boat towards the log. He brought it up to it in such a manner that the other man could strike his hook into it. When this was done, the oarsman began

to pull the boat towards the shore, drawing the log with it.

By this time the whole group disappeared from Marco's view, behind a boat which was hanging on the quarter of the steamer. Marco, who wished to watch the whole proceeding, left Forester, and ran aft, in hopes that he could get another view of the men in the boat. He found, however, that the steamboat was proceeding so rapidly up the river, that he was fast losing sight of them; and then he concluded to go forward to the bows of the steamboat, thinking that, perhaps, there might be other logs coming down the river, with men after them in boats.

When he reached the bows, Marco found the deck encumbered with cables and anchors, and heavy boxes of freight, which made it difficult for him to find his way to a good place for a view. He finally reached a place where, by standing upon an anchor, he could look over the bulwarks, and get a view of the expanse of water before him. It was smooth, and its glassy surface was bright with the reflection of the rays of the morning sun.

Marco admired the beauty of the river and of its banks, but he could see no boats, or even logs coming. He saw some large sand banks before him, which had been left bare by the efflux of the tide. He wished that the steamboat would stop, and let him land upon one of them. He also looked down over the bows, and admired the graceful form and beautiful smoothness of the ripple, or rather wave, which was formed by the cutwater of the boat as it urged its way rapidly through the water. After gazing

upon this for some time, Marco turned to go away in pursuit of Forester, when an occurrence took place, which being somewhat important in its consequences, the account of it must be deferred to the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.
THE LOST BUCKET

As Marco was stepping down from the position which he had taken upon the anchor, his eye fell upon a small bucket, with a long rope tied to the handle, which he immediately recognised as one of those buckets which the sailors fit up in that way, in order to draw up water from alongside the ship.

"There's a bucket, now," said Marco to himself. "I declare, I believe I'll draw up some water. Forester said that it was hard, but I think it will be easy. I'll draw up a bucket full, and carry to him and show him."

So saying, Marco took up the bucket, lifted it gently over the side, and let it down slowly by the rope into the water. There was a knot in the end of the rope; and Marco held the knot firmly in his hand, so as to draw up the bucket by means of it, as soon as he should get it full. He found, however, that, although he could let the pail down easily enough, it was no easy matter to dip up any water into it; for the rope, being fastened to the bail or handle, kept the handle, and of course the open part of the pail, upwards, so that the water could not run in. If Marco let the rope down more, the pail, being light, would not sink, but skipped along upon the surface of the water, drawn by the motion of the steamboat.

While Marco was making these fruitless attempts, another boy, dressed in sailor's clothes, whom Marco had seen several times before about the boat, came up to him, and asked him what he was doing.

"I'm trying to get some water," said Marco.

"That isn't the way to get it," said the sailor boy. "Let me have the bucket. I'll show you the way."

"No," said Marco, "I want to get it myself."

"You never can get any that way," said the boy. "You must swing it back and forth, and when it is swinging well, let it drop suddenly and catch the water."

So Marco began to swing the bucket back and forth, and after he had got it well a-swinging, he let down the rope suddenly, at the moment when the bucket was at the extent of its oscillation. The bucket filled instantly; but, as the boat was advancing rapidly, it was caught by the water with such force that the rope was twitched out of Marco's hand with great force.

"Hold on!" exclaimed the sailor boy.

But it was too late. The rope fell down into the water, and the bucket, rope and all, sailed back upon the surface of the water, until they floated under the paddle wheel of the boat, which dashed them down beneath the surface of the water, and they disappeared finally from view.

"Why did not you hold on?" said the boy.

Marco was silent.

The boy looked round to see if anybody had observed what

had taken place. He found that all the seamen were busy here and there, and that nobody had noticed what the two boys had been doing.

"Nobody has seen you," said the sailor boy; "so you say nothing, and I'll say nothing."

"But suppose they ask you what has become of that bucket," said Marco; "what will you tell them?"

"Oh, I'll tell them I don't know where it is," he replied; "and I don't. I am sure I don't know where it is now: do you? Hush, here comes Joe."

Marco looked up at these words, and saw the sailor approaching whom the boy called Joe; and the boy himself immediately stepped down from the anchor, where he and Marco had been standing, and began coiling a rope upon the deck. Marco walked sorrowfully away towards the stern of the vessel, where he had left Forester.

There was something wrong and something right in the boy's proposal to Marco, to conceal the loss of the bucket. His object was to befriend and help Marco in his distress. This was right. The means by which he proposed to accomplish the object were secrecy and fraud. This was wrong. Thus, the end which he had in view was a good one, and it evinced a good feeling in him; but the means for promoting it were criminal. Some persons have maintained that if the end is only right, it is of no consequence by what means we seek to promote it. Hence, they have had this maxim, viz., "The end sanctifies the means." But this maxim

is not sound. The contrary principle is correct. It is sometimes expressed by this saying: "We must not do evil that good may come;" which is a much safer proverb to be guided by.

Marco's first impulse was, to go at once and tell the captain of the steamboat that he had lost his bucket. But he did not know exactly where he could find him. He looked at his office window, and found that it was shut. He asked one of the waiters, whom he met coming up stairs from the cabin, if he knew where the captain was. But the waiter did not know. Presently, he saw a gentleman walking back and forth upon that part of the deck which is in front of the door of the ladies' cabin. He thought that he was the captain. Marco walked up to him, and accosted him by saying:

"Are you the captain of this boat, sir?"

"Am I the captain?" asked the man. "Why? What do you want to know for?"

"Because, if you are," said Marco, "I have lost your bucket."

"Lost my bucket!" repeated the gentleman. "How did you lose it?"

"I lost it overboard," said Marco.

Here the gentleman laughed, and said, "No, I'm not captain; but you seem to be an honest sort of boy. I don't know where the captain is."

All this, though it has taken some time to describe it, took place in a very few minutes; and the boat had now advanced only so far as to be opposite the steam mill which Marco had seen just

before he had left Forester. Marco happened to see the mill as the boat moved by it, and he went immediately to the side of the boat to get a better view of it.

There was a chimney for the smoke, and a pipe for the waste steam, at the mill. From the steam-pipe there issued a dense column of vapor, which came up, however, not in a regular current, like the smoke from the chimney, but it was puffed up in regular strokes, making a sort of pulsation. While Marco was looking at it, Forester came along, and stood looking at it too. There were a great many logs lying about the shore, and enormous piles of boards, which had been sawed, and which were ready for the vessels that were to come and take them away.

"What makes the steam come up in puffs?" asked Marco.

"Because, it is what they call a high pressure engine," said Forester. "It works against the pressure of the atmosphere. All such engines throw out the steam in puffs."

"Why do they?" asked Marco.

"Do you know what the cylinder of a steam engine is?" said Forester.

"Not exactly; I don't remember it very well," replied Marco.

"Come with me, then," said Forester, "and I will show it to you."

So saying, he took Marco to the engine of the boat, and showed him, in the midst of the machinery, a large iron vessel, shaped like a hogshead, only it had straight sides. Marco could not see much more than the top of it.

"That is the cylinder," said Forester. "It is the *heart* of the steam engine, as I may say—the seat of its power. All the other machinery is only to aid the cylinder, and to convey the power to the point where it is wanted to do the work. Thus, the place where the steam exerts its power, and on which the whole movement of the machinery depends, is the cylinder."

Marco observed that a long iron rod, large and solid, and very bright, kept ascending and descending through the top of the cylinder, as if pushed up and drawn down again by some force within. Forester told him that that was the piston rod.

"The piston rod," said Forester, "is fastened, at its lower end, to the *piston*, which is a flat plate of iron, made to fit the inside of the cylinder exactly."

"First," said Forester, "the steam comes in below the piston, and drives it up; and then it is stopped from coming in below, and is forced in above, and so drives it down."

"And how does the other steam get out?" asked Marco.

"There are two ways of getting rid of the steam that is below the piston when the piston is coming down," said Forester. "One way is, to open a passage to let it out *into the air*. On this plan, when the piston has been driven up, the steam is cut off from coming in below the piston, and is admitted above. At the same instant, the passage is opened to let the lower steam out. Of course, the steam that comes in *above*, drives the piston down, and forces the steam that is *below*, out into the air. They generally have a pipe to convey it away, and as the piston goes up and down,

the steam comes out in puffs, as you saw it in that mill."

"Yes," said Marco, "I understand that; and now what is the other way?"

"That kind of engine is called a *high pressure* engine," said Forester, "because the piston, in coming down, has to drive out the steam from below, against the pressure of the atmosphere; for the atmosphere above passes into the pipe, and resists the movement of the steam in coming out. It requires a greater force of steam to work the piston on this plan than it does upon the other."

"What is the plan of the other?" asked Marco.

"On the other plan," said Forester, "the steam under the piston is condensed, that is, turned suddenly into water; and this leaves a vacancy or void below the piston, so that the piston can be forced down much more easily than if it had to drive the steam out before it, against the pressure of the atmosphere."

Forester was going on to explain to Marco how it was that the steam was condensed in the cylinder, when the conversation was suddenly interrupted by the sound of the engine bell, which was the signal for the engine to stop. The thumping sound of the machinery and of the paddle wheels accordingly ceased, and the boat began to move more slowly. Presently, the bell sounded once more, and the piston rod slowly rose out of the cylinder, and then slowly descended again.

"They are going very slowly," said Marco.

"Yes," replied Forester, "the water is low, and I suppose that

the channel is narrow."

Just at this moment, they perceived a strange sensation, as if the steamboat had been suddenly pushed backwards. Marco was startled. He did not know what it meant.

"There we are," said Forester.

"What?" said Marco. "What is it?"

"Aground," said Forester.

"Aground?" repeated Marco.

"Yes," said Forester; "that's the sensation produced when a ship goes aground upon sand or soft mud."

So saying, Forester left the engine, and went up to the upper deck, followed by Marco. There were several persons there, looking out upon the water.

"Yes," said Forester, "we are aground. You see by the trees upon the bank that we are not moving."

Marco saw that they were at rest. He asked Forester what they were going to do.

Just at this moment the little bell sounded, and the engine, which had been stopped when the boat went aground, was put in motion again.

"They are going to back the engine, I suppose," said Forester, "to try to draw her off."

But the boat would not move. The engine did not seem to have power to release her from her confinement.

"What shall we do now?" asked Marco.

"Why, whenever a ship is aground," said Forester, "the first

question is, what is the state of the tide?"

"Because," continued Forester, after a moment's pause, "if the tide is *rising*, it soon lifts the vessel off, and enables her to go back, or, perhaps, forward, if the water is not very shallow. But, if the tide is *falling*, it leaves her to rest more and more upon the sand, and she cannot get off until the water has gone entirely down, and then rises again. She cannot get off, in fact, until the water has risen higher than it was when she first grounded."

"And how is it now?" asked Marco.

"I presume the tide is going down," said Forester; "and if so, we must wait here until it rises again." So saying, he began to look about for somebody of whom he could inquire. He soon heard a gentleman say to another that the tide was falling, and that they should have to stay here three hours.

"That's rather provoking," said Marco.

"Oh, no," said Forester. "Perhaps we can go ashore."

"Well," said Marco, with an expression of gratification at the proposal.

"And perhaps we can borrow some fishing lines, and go a fishing."

"Yes," said Marco, "that will be an excellent plan."

"At any rate," said Forester, "when accidents of this sort occur upon our travels, we should not allow ourselves to be provoked by them, but make ourselves contented by the best means within our reach."

At this time, they began to hear the loud, hissing sound,

produced by the blowing off of the steam from the engine, which Forester said was an additional indication that they were going to remain there for some time. Presently, a man came up the stairs from the deck below—for Forester and Marco were at this time on the upper deck—and told the passengers that the boat would have to remain there three or four hours, and that if any of them wished to go ashore to amuse themselves, he would send them in his boat, after breakfast.

Quite a number of the passengers seemed disposed to accept this offer, and the boat was accordingly lowered; and Joe, with two other sailors, were despatched to row it ashore. They were all safely landed upon a raft of logs, just above the mill.

CHAPTER III.
A RAFT

Forester and Marco did not take breakfast on board the steamboat, but waited until they got on shore. They had inquired of a fellow-passenger, who seemed acquainted with the country, and were told that there was a very good tavern about a quarter of a mile from the mill.

When they landed upon the logs, Marco, whose curiosity seemed to be stronger than his appetite, wanted to ramble about for a little time along the shore and among the piles of boards, but Forester thought it would be best first to go and get their breakfast.

"Because," said he, "we can then amuse ourselves by rambling about here, and shall be ready to return to the steamboat whenever they send for us."

So they went to the tavern.

Forester seemed to have little appetite for his breakfast. He complained of feeling fatigued, and yet he had nothing to fatigue him. Marco ate, and talked fast all the time; but Forester seemed silent and dejected.

"Come, cousin Forester, what is the matter with you?" said Marco at last.

Forester said that he felt somewhat unwell, and as there was

a sofa in the room, he concluded to lie down upon it, and not go out. Marco was, at first, disposed to stay and take care of him, but Forester said that he did not need anything, and he wished Marco to go out and amuse himself.

"You may go and see the mill," said he, "and the logs along the shore; only be careful not to go where there is any danger; and come and let me know when the boat is coming from the steamer to take us on board again."

So Marco left Forester upon the sofa, and went away. He was sorry that he was sick, and he was particularly sorry that he had to go himself without company. But, concluding that he would adopt Forester's principle of making the best of everything, in the events which occur in travelling, he walked along the road, singing a tune which he had learned at a juvenile singing school in New York, and watching the pulsations of the steam, as it issued from the pipe at the mill.

As Marco walked along, it occurred to him that he had not, after all, succeeded in acknowledging to the captain of the steamboat that he had lost the bucket. And, since the first occasion for doing so had gone by, he began to doubt whether it would be best for him to trouble himself any farther about it.

"The bucket was not worth much," said he to himself. "Nobody knows it is lost, except that boy, and he will not tell. I've a great mind not to say anything about it."

In fact, Marco found that he was much less inclined to make his acknowledgment now, than he was when the circumstance

first occurred. He wished that he had at once stated the facts to Forester, which would have been his wisest course; but now, that the first occasion for doing so had passed away, he began to feel disinclined to do it at all.

Marco soon reached the mill, and he amused himself, for half an hour, in watching the movement of the engine, the strokes of the saw, and the drawing up of the logs from the water to the floor of the mill. There was a steep, sloping platform from the mill down to the river, and a long chain extended down to the water. This chain was fastened to one end of one of the logs, which lay floating there, and then, by means of the machinery, it was drawn slowly up, bringing the ponderous log with it.

The way in which the machinery drew up the chain was this: The end of the chain, which was within the mill, was wound around an axle, which was made to revolve by the machinery. The axle, thus revolving, wound up the chain, and, in this manner, drew it gradually in, by which means the log, which was attached to the lower end of it, was drawn up.

Presently, Marco's attention was attracted towards some men, who seemed to be sailing about upon some logs, in a cove, just below the mill. He went down immediately to see what they were doing. They had long poles in their hands, with iron points in the ends of them, and were pushing the logs about with these poles, to choose out such as they wished to saw in the mill.

Just as Marco came down, one of the men stepped upon the end of a log which was floating very near him. The log sank

a little, but not much, under him, and the man walked along towards the other end of it. Marco wondered how he could keep his balance.

When the millman reached the farther end of the log, he extended his long pole very dexterously, and struck the point of it into the corner of a sort of wharf, which was built upon the bank; and then, pulling gently, he drew himself along, together with the log upon which he was floating. Marco was surprised at this, and he wondered that the man did not fall off the log. He thought that if the log were to roll in the least degree, the man would be rolled off into the water. He ran down to the little wharf, so that he could see better.

"Well, my boy," said the millman, "do you belong on board the steamboat?"

"Yes, sir," said Marco; "we got aground. You'll fall off of that log if you don't take care."

"No," said the millman, "there's no danger."

"Why, if the log should roll the least atom, away you'd go," said Marco, "though the water is not very deep."

Here the man began to step upon the log in a peculiar manner, so as to make it roll. It rolled slowly, but the man continued stepping until he had rolled it completely over. The side which had been under water appeared of a dark color, and was very slippery, being covered with a sort of slime; but the man did not slip. After he had thus rolled the log completely over, he looked up to Marco, and said,

"There, you see that there is no danger."

When the man had drawn this log up to the shore, he went for another; and he had to sail upon this second one a long distance, in bringing it to its place. He pushed himself along by running his pole down to the bottom, and pushing against the sand.

"Could I sail upon a log?" asked Marco.

"No," replied the millman; "you'd roll off."

"How did you learn to do it?" asked Marco.

"Oh, I learned when I was a boy," replied the millman.

"Did you roll off when you were learning?" asked Marco.

"Yes," said the man. "I've been off the log into the water many a time."

"And how did you get out again?" said Marco.

"Oh, I could swim," he replied; "and as soon as I came up, I would paddle back to the log, and climb up upon it. Once, however, I came very near being drowned."

"How was it?" said Marco.

"Why, I was on the upper side of a boom"–

"A boom?" said Marco, "what is that?"

"A boom!" repeated the millman; "don't you know what a boom is? It is a place to catch logs. They go to some cove or eddy, where the water is pretty still, and chain logs together, end to end, so as to form a long line on the lower side of the eddy, and then along up the middle of the river a little way, so as to enclose a space to catch the logs."

"What do they fasten the boom to?" asked Marco.

"Why, the lower end," said the millman, "is fastened to the shore, by means of a very strong post, or an iron staple set into the rocks. The other end, which is out in the middle of the stream, is fastened to some island, if there is one, or, if not, to a pier built up from the bottom."

"Well," said Marco, "tell on about your getting in."

"The boom was full of logs, and I was upon the upper side of it, at work with some other men. I was on a log trying to find the mark, and I fell in."

"What made you fall off?" asked Marco.

"I don't know," replied the millman. "I was not much use to logs then. I was trying to find the mark."

"What mark?" asked Marco.

"The owner's mark," said the millman. "The owners all mark their logs, when they get them out in the winter, and then we separate or sort them in the booms. Sometimes the mark is on the under side of the log, and so we have to turn it over in the water to find it."

While all this conversation had been going on, the millman had been moving about over the water with the various logs, Marco accompanying him, and keeping as near to him as possible, walking along the shore, and sometimes on the logs which were resting by one end on the shore. As the millman was describing the system of marking the logs, he was sailing along very near to Marco, and he immediately began to turn the log over under him, saying—

"For instance, look here, and see me turn up the mark of this log."

Marco watched the log, as it slowly revolved, until presently there came a sort of hieroglyphical mark upon one end, made by crosses and lines cut into the wood.

"Every owner has his particular mark," said the millman.

"Whose mark is that?" asked Marco.

"I don't know," said the man, "but they know at the mill. They have a register of them all at the mill."

"I wish I could turn over a log, standing on it, in that way," said Marco.

"You couldn't," said the millman. "The only way by which you can sail safely on logs, would be to put two together, and make a sort of raft."

"How?" asked Marco.

"By nailing short pieces of boards across from one log to another. Then they would not roll."

"Well," said Marco, "if I could only get a hammer and some nails."

The millman told him that perhaps they would let him have a hammer and some nails at the mill; and Marco, accordingly, went up to inquire. They told him they had a hammer, but they had no nails to spare. So Marco failed of getting the means of making a raft. He forgot to go back to the millman to get the rest of his story, but, instead of it, he rambled down the bank of the river, until he came to a place where there was an old fence,

which had fallen down, and the nails were sticking out of the boards. He now wished that he had borrowed the hammer at the mill, and he tried to persuade a boy, who was standing there, to go and borrow it for him.

The boy told him that a stone would do very well for a hammer.

"So it will," said Marco; "find me a good one, and bring it to this old fence."

The boy brought Marco a stone, and Marco began to knock out the nails. Very soon, however, he set the boy at work upon the nails, while he went in pursuit of some short boards, to nail across from one log to the other. He found some, which he thought would answer, without much difficulty, and collected them together near the logs; and, soon afterwards, the boy brought him the nails.

The logs were lying side by side, with two ends resting upon the shore, the two other ends being out towards the stream. Marco concluded to nail first the two ends which were towards the shore, they being nearest, and being also more steady than the others. He accordingly laid one of his short pieces across, and nailed it as well as he could, using the stone for a hammer.

"Now," said he to the boy, "I'll put another board across at the middle, and one more at the other end, and then, if I can find something for a pole, I'll take a little sail. Look about a little, my boy, won't you," continued he, "and see if you can't find a pole, while I am nailing the other boards."

The boy accordingly went away in pursuit of a pole, while Marco nailed first the middle board, and then the end one. He came back just after Marco had got the first nail of the end board driven in, and as soon as he came in sight of the logs and of Marco, he exclaimed—

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.